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EDITORIAL COMMENT



FAULTS OF CHARACTER MORE THAN TRAINING

MISS ANNA A. DAVIDSON, in her two papers in which she deals with the little things in nursing that make for failure or success, has shown commendable courage in attacking a subject that is more often discussed by the public than by nurses with one another. Every word that Miss Davidson has written is true, and coming from one of our own members we may look for the cause without feeling that irritation and annoyance that is naturally aroused when our faults are pointed out to us by someone outside of the family.

We reprint in the "Miscellany" a paper entitled "The Question of the Hour" by Miss Margaret Breay, one of the editorial staff of the *British Journal of Nursing*, who writes upon the defects in the home education of girls, as bearing upon the training of nurses. We think the deficiencies that Miss Davidson criticises are more the faults of character than of training, combined with the defects in the education of girls which Miss Breay makes so plain.

Such conditions prevail quite as generally among certain classes in America as in England. The great middle class, which gives to the country the men who make the "backbone of the nation," turns out rather a poorly educated type of women from which to make nurses, and it is from this class that nurses are very largely drawn.

Some wise man has said, "Give me the training of a boy until he is ten, and after that the world may have him."

No woman of experience in the work will contest our assertion that the character of the woman is formed before she enters the training-school. Those moral qualities upon which depend habits of truth, sincerity, stability of purpose, of unselfishness, and consideration and thoughtfulness for others that are to go with the girl through life have been instilled into the very fibre of her being before she leaves the common school, and in just the proportion that there has been fixed a basis to build upon the discipline of the hospital life develops her character. Environment, routine, and the example of others may for a time cover up certain defects of heart and mind, but upon just the lines that her character was moulded in her girlhood she will continue to walk after she leaves the discipline and protection of the hospital.

During the three years in which she has to be taught the thousand and one things that are now necessary for a nurse to know the training-school cannot hope to entirely overcome the faults of the twenty-two years of home training that have gone before.

Heedlessness, thoughtlessness, and carelessness are faults of character, and in a woman who has chosen nursing as a life-work are unpardonable, but these are the faults, in a great measure, of the women of the age in which we live.

The remedy is a part of what we commonly call the woman question, of which the nursing problem is but a unit. With broader education and experience women, like men, will in greater numbers grow stronger in those qualities that stand for character, and in just the ratio that the home develops its girls upon sound lines

of moral responsibility, in just that proportion will the nursing profession send into the home the kind of nurses that it is now demanding.

Nurses, from the nature of their work, are thrown more sharply into public view than any other class of working-women. Life, suffering, and death are the most sacred of all human problems. A woman who does not carry in her heart an appreciation of what suffering means, both mental and physical, can never hope to satisfy her patients in those little personal things that make for failure or success.

MORE NEWS ITEMS

GRADUALLY during the past year we have encroached upon the space allotted to news items to make room for what has often seemed more important material, but we shall hereafter, at the request of many readers, add to our pages of "Hospital Items" and to the "Miscellany," making mention more fully in the latter department of work along other lines that touches the work or life of the nurse, and giving extracts in brief from such publications as give space to such subjects. We shall be especially glad of contributions to this department or authentic "clippings" endorsed by the sender.

THE FOURTH-YEAR ANNOUNCEMENT

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING is entering upon its fourth year with promises of continued prosperity, and with the intention and expectation of making this year's numbers more interesting than any of those preceding. Among the papers that will be given in the near future will be an article on "Training-Schools in Insane Hospitals," written by the pioneer, Miss Linda Richards, who for a number of years has been giving the benefit of her great experience to this class of work. Miss M. A. Nutting, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, is preparing a paper on "Devices for Comfort in the Care of Rheumatic Patients." Miss L. L. Drown has promised a description of the "Summer Tent Service at the Boston City Hospital," and we are also to have a paper on the out-door work of the Children's Hospital, in which Boston has worked out a most complete system of caring for its discharged children wearing braces and casts.

Miss Elizabeth Campbell Gordon, of Toronto, whose article on typhoid attracted so much favorable comment, will contribute a series of papers on emergency work. From her position as superintendent of an Emergency Hospital she is able to give most instructive information, and she has a charm of style as a writer that will make her papers interesting.

Miss Jeannette D. MacDonald will describe the duties of the quarantine nurse at Angel Island, Cal. This is a new field for nurses, and her paper will be looked for with much interest. Miss S. H. Cabaniss, Johns Hopkins Hospital, at the head of the Nurses' Settlement at Richmond, will write on the "Medical Attitude from the Nurse's Standpoint." Miss Jessie McCallam, Johns Hopkins Hospital, assistant at the Post-Graduate Hospital, New York, will give a paper on "Little Devices for Comfort." Miss Ruth Brewster Sherman, Johns Hopkins Hospital, has several papers in preparation. Miss Mary Moss, whose masterly paper, "The Evolution of the Trained Nurse," was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May last, sends a sketch of a visit to the leper colony in Jamaica. Miss Moss is not a trained nurse, but she is wonderfully in sympathy with nursing interests.

Miss Mary J. Reynolds, New York City Training-School, has a paper on

"Nursing in Typhoid." There will be occasional medical papers, written by physicians, but preferred space is given always to contributions from nurses.

Miss Annie Damer, of Buffalo, will write upon the reorganization of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae, with special reference to the changes in the by-laws that are to be made next year. Miss Damer is one of our best parliamentarians, and her recommendations are sure to be based upon good business principles and wise common-sense.

IMPORTANT MEETINGS IN PITTSBURG

WITH October organization work begins, and the first important meeting is that of the Pennsylvania State Nurses' Association, to be held at Hotel Schenley, Pittsburg, Pa., on Monday and Tuesday, October 5, 6. The programme given in another column shows that the Committee of Arrangements are making every effort to render the sessions both profitable and entertaining.

We claim the privilege of giving to the nurses of the outlying districts in the State a word of advice: Do not wait until the hardest of the work is done before you move or show your interest. The most exciting place in this procession is to ride in the band-wagon. You want to be there. It is the influence of the nurses from the small towns and country districts that will pass your bill. This is a matter that concerns the State of Pennsylvania, not any one city or any exclusive group of people. There must be leaders, but the leaders can do nothing without followers and supporters, and in every remote corner of the State they must have lieutenants, trustworthy and loyal, to move quickly and intelligently at a given signal. You cannot be in touch with this great movement without attending the meetings, and you will never regret any effort or sacrifice that it may cost you to be present.

Do not stop to ask, "What good is this all going to do me?" be satisfied that someone who is to follow you will reap the benefit.

CONGRESS REPORTS

WE neglected in our comment on the Buffalo Congress Report in the last number to mention that these reports are now in the hands of Miss Tamar E. Healy, 160 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, and that the cost is one dollar and twenty-five cents each. By the prompt purchase of the books now in Miss Healy's keeping the Alumnae Association will be relieved of an embarrassing debt. Every alumnae association can at least present a volume to its training-school library.

THE SUPERINTENDENTS' CONVENTION

FOLLOWING the Pennsylvania State Nurses, the American Society of Superintendents of Training-Schools for Nurses convenes on Wednesday at the same place—Hotel Schenley, Pittsburg—for a three-days' session. The only formidable thing about this society is its name. The members are all friends, the membership, compared with the alumnae and State associations, being small, and the personal element enters into the occasion in a manner that lends great charm. Old friends are meeting and new friends are being made, while all discuss those problems peculiar to the work in which they are engaged.

There promises to be an unusually large attendance of the older members this year, and the programme offers great inducements to every member to be present. The meeting coming so early in the month, we hope to be able to publish the secretary's report and some of the papers in the November JOURNAL.

CHANGE OF DATE

We call especial attention to the date of the Superintendents' meeting—October 7, 8, 9, Hotel Schenley, Pittsburg, Pa.

NEW YORK STATE

At the last annual meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association, held in Albany in April, an amendment to the by-laws changed the meetings from quarterly to semiannually, and on the third Tuesday, the twentieth, of October the first semiannual meeting will be held in the Academy of Medicine, New York City.

The Board of Nurse Examiners having held its first meeting with the College Committee of the Regents of the University on September 15, the report of this board will be looked for with great interest. Something more in detail of what registration is actually to mean in New York State will be expected, and undoubtedly by that time definite lines will have been agreed upon.

This year New York has it, the president, secretary, treasurer, and chairman of the Committee on Credentials being all residents of that city. The attendance should be large, and up-State members should make it a point to be present. With the passage of the bill the work of registration is only just begun, and to continue to do effective work nurses all over the State must keep in close touch and sympathy.

MAKE APPLICATION NOW—REGISTRATION BEGINS IN NEW YORK STATE

WE publish in the department of Official Reports the announcement issued from the Regents' Office, Albany, of the organization of the Nurse Board of Examiners, and we wish to impress upon the nurses of the State the importance of applying at an early date for the application blanks. The clerical work which the execution of the new law will involve in the Regents' Office will be great, and there are questions of finances and service which cannot be determined until the secretary has some idea of the number of applications that will have to be considered.

Let it be clearly understood once more that nurses in good standing, holding a diploma from an approved school for nurses giving at least a two-years' course, applying within three years, will be granted a certificate of registration by the Regents of the University *without taking an examination*, provided they comply with all of the conditions set forth in the application blank, and it will facilitate the work for the Regents' Office, and also of the Board of Examiners, to have the registration of these graduates gotten through with as quickly as possible.

The method of procedure is very simple. Send a letter to James Russell Parsons, Jr., secretary, Regents' Office, Albany, N. Y., asking for application blank for the registration of nurses. Be quite sure the letter is dated, that the name is plainly written, that the address gives street number, city or town and county, and comply with every condition called for before returning the blank to Mr. Parsons at the Regents' Office. Then wait patiently for results and watch the pages of this

JOURNAL for information in regard to the progress of the work of registration. It stands to reason that if two thousand nurses apply the work will be comparatively easy, but if, as we are told, there are eight thousand nurses in New York City alone, it may take the entire three years to get through the list.

Make application now. The blanks are ready and there is nothing to be gained by delay.

INSTRUCTION TO PRACTICAL NURSES

THE instruction to practical nurses is made quite plain in the official announcement. The practical demonstration is intended to show the applicants' manual dexterity in performing certain duties, without which any amount of theoretical knowledge is valueless in a nurse, but as the first of these examinations will not be until June, we will give more detailed information in a later number. Nurses intending to take the examination in practical nursing should apply for the blank in the same way as that prescribed for the graduates. The Regents' Office needs to know at an early date how many nurses will come up for this examination in June.

NOT COMPULSORY

REGISTRATION is not compulsory. If a nurse does not care to register, she can practise nursing just as she has always done, but the use of the title "R. N." will in time be the distinguishing mark between the nurse who is trained and the one who is not trained, and by applying now no examination is necessary for graduates in good standing to secure the right to use the title.

MISS BARNARD RESIGNS

WE regret to announce the resignation from our staff of collaborators of Miss Helena Barnard, Johns Hopkins Hospital, who is living, as she says, "out of touch" with nursing interests, and is consequently unable to take that active place in the JOURNAL work which she feels the position calls for. Miss Barnard has been and will continue to be one of the JOURNAL's warmest friends and promoters, and we hope at some future day to place her name again in our pages.

